

# AFFAIRS OF THE WEEK IN THE PLAYHOUSES



CARROLL  
MECOMACK IN  
"INSIDE THE LINES AT  
THE LONGACRE THEATRE"

## PLAYS & PLAYERS

Concerning "Roasts" — Some Other Things Equally Inconsequential.

By HECTOR TURNBULL

Why, when a play is obviously bad, do you not dismiss the performance in a sentence or two? Why not roast the management and the actors as they deserve, for having anything to do with the thing? Why describe the play at length and elaborate on its few good points when it is not worth the price of admission?

The above is a bit from the last page of a long-long letter (consisting, for the most part, of abuse) that we received the other day. Our first impulse was to put it aside and forget it, but upon reflection we were suddenly saddened by the thought that perhaps there are other readers who maintain a similar attitude. Therefore we take this opportunity to remind this type of playgoer that newspaper men who write of new productions in the theatres are always reporters first and commentators afterward. A new play is news and must be adequately reported as such before its merits or demerits may be discussed. This is one very good reason for not writing a "roast" in a sentence or two. Then, our correspondent should consider the poor author. He has probably worked for months and weeks and foregoes his contribution to dramatic art, and it would seem rather a pity to sum up the results of all that labor and fasting in a one sentence "roast."

Consider, too, the poor players; they may be (and often are) in bad plays) consummate artists struggling for expression through a fog of amateurish dialogue. They are not to be blamed for attempting the impossible and at the same time seizing an opportunity to provide themselves with funds. They should be commended for their courage rather than "roasted." We might mention, also, the state of their feelings if they sought to add a one-sentence "roast" to their scrap books, and suggest the possible effects of these roasts upon their careers, but we won't because we are not speaking of the power of dramatic criticism. We merely point out its function, which is to be a wee bit honest and a wee bit just.

Speaking of bad plays or bad performances reminds us that there is always a splendid remedy in readiness for the blasé theatregoer who rails at the fate which leads him to a series of poor plays during a season. Just when he is recovering from what he thinks is the worst play in existence, let him visit an amateur performance of some classic drama. Of course, he may be agreeably surprised by actual evidences of talent in the cast, but our experience has taught us to expect at least one glorious specimen of abject inability. Let our bored playgoer feast his eyes and ears on the sights and sounds that emanate from such a zealot. Let him suffer for a while the will if he is at all sensitive) with this poor thing as the forgotten lines are hoarsely bawled at the frightened creature from the wings. Let him see how terrible a thing it is to lack that essential we glibly call a "stage presence." Then if he casts a look at the groups of proud relatives in the audience he will leave the auditorium to offer a prayer of gratitude for even the worst kind of a professional production.

## SEARCHING FOR REALISM

Zelda Sears Tells How She Became a Trained Nurse.

"An actress who goes pretty nearly anywhere in the world in search of a character she has to play—if her heart's in her work," said Zelda Sears, the serio-comic "stage mother" in "The Show Ship," at the Hudson Theatre, "and I've served my time in queer places, hunting for mine. But the experience that has stuck in my mind as the biggest, strangest, most absorbing one I ever had was the time I landed up in Bellevue Hospital, putting in a card index system!"

"And that was?"

"That was a long time ago, if you must have it. It was just after Clyde Fitch had made the first draft of 'The Truth' and the part I was to play, and did afterward play here at the Little Theatre, was originally intended to be a trained nurse. Mr. Fitch told me about it, just before he was sailing for Europe for the best part of the summer, and I promptly protested. 'I don't know the first thing about a trained nurse,' I said. 'Zelda, go and learn,' was his answer. It was about all the answer I ever got out of him, when I went complaining that I didn't know this and that."

"Well, he sailed off for Europe, and I was in a great state of mind. I still had my typing shop then, and I used to keep my eye on the 'Women wanted' column in the paper, just on general principles, to keep my girls in work, and one day, not long after he sailed, I saw an advertisement for a stenographer

with a slight knowledge of Latin and medical terms. The address was an awfully good one, over in the East 30's. I put on my inebriated and most unbecoming expression and skipped over there. Bless you, what do you think! It was a doctor's, in a private hospital, who wanted a stenographer from 6 in the evening till 11! Nothing could have been luckier for me. I went that very afternoon."

"I saw any number of nurses buzzing about, and my common sense told me that they had to eat somewhere; so along about dinner time I said to my doctor: 'I'm pretty far from home. Is there anywhere down here that I could get my dinners?' The guileless scoundrel, 'Why, yes, if you wouldn't mind eating at the nurses' table, you can have your dinners here in the hospital.' 'If I wouldn't mind?' You bet I didn't! So I went down and dined with the nurses, and I asked them questions till they nearly threw me out. Of course, they didn't dream I was just Mrs. Sears, a stenographer, to them. They told me the most naive tales about the stage. And bless their dear hearts, I hope they never have found out anything different! Well, at the end of a few months there wasn't much I didn't know about nurses—hospitals, either, for that matter. I slaved to make myself generally useful, so that I could get upstairs, and it finally got to the point where they'd say to me: 'Mrs. Sears, the man up in No. 17 is pretty low in his mind to-night; suppose you go up and have a little talk with him.' Then, in my work downstairs I found things terribly unsystematic, so I suggested that I should put in a card index



LILLAH MCCARTHY IN  
"MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S  
DREAM" AT WALLACK'S

system I used. They jumped at it, and the next thing I knew I had been asked to go down to Bellevue and install that system in two of the wards down there.

"And that's the part I don't like to talk about, much—the concentrated agony of the whole world is right in a charity hospital. Once in a while something funny happens. I remember once I went into a room where there were two poor women thought to be dying. They had both had frightful operations, and when I went into the room they both seemed unconscious. I had a brand new hat, and I laid it down on the table and tipped out. In about an hour I heard a terrible hubbub coming out of that room, and I rushed down the hall to see what was the matter. The two women, each of them, so help me, with one foot in the grave and the other on a banana peel, were sitting up in bed heaping abuse on each other such as I have never heard before or since. Nobody could make head or tail of it. It was just a stream of profanity and billingsgate, and they screamed it out at each other, well, finally we made out what it was. It seems that one of them had turned over and taken a look at my hat, and had announced that it would be becoming to her. The other had called her a liar and a fool for thinking it, and then they were off. But the funniest thing was that standing in the middle of the room, hit from both directions with this flow of vile language, was a sweet little probationer, squeaking above the din, 'Oh, ladies, ladies, you must hush ladies please!'

"Yes, I know. Mr. Fitch afterwards made her a landlady instead of a nurse in 'The Truth,' so I had my pains for nothing. But you can't tell I may yet have to play a nurse—and when I do, you can bet I'll know how."

## ON PERSONALITY

Young Actress Should Beware of Its Influence, Says Ruth Chatterton.

By Doris Fleischman.

The second stage in the evolution of the ingenue is distinctly an American feature. The innocent, sweet, the appealing young girl is no longer the pitiful buffet of the fates and a magnetic villain; she is a dramatic personage who weeps, storms, smiles and sinuates her way through the maze of her difficulties. America is not fond of sophistication. It adores chuckling over the charming immaturities of inexperience, but it soon wears out even spinnery stupidity. Therefore, it floes now in multitudes to see the pretty ingenue, who is no longer merely the ingenue, but is also the thinking and plotting heroine, who is clever and interesting and even distractingly emotional.

If one but remembers the two plays which in the last two years have scored the biggest success one can readily see that the modern heroine has assumed a new guise, which will definitely alter her status. In "Peg o' My Heart" and in Jean Webster's "Daddy Long-Legs," now playing at the Gaiety Theatre, the audience cared little for the dramatic construction of the plays, but it watched with rapt gaze for the smile, for the tear of little Peg and ragged progressive Judy Abbott. It sighed with contentment at the pathetic pluck of the little girl, who with instinctive courage and good taste pits her wit against wise school boards and haughty D. A. R's.

Ruth Chatterton, who plays the part of Judy Abbott, paused thoughtfully



JESSIE BONSTELLE OPENING WITH  
"A STOCK COMPANY AT THE WEST END  
THEATRE"

and regarded her interviewer. "Yes," she whispered: "To beware of personality. Personality is a good thing. If she has it she should thank God, but she must not let it become her greatest barrier to true success. By the time an actress gets to be twenty-seven, and she threw out her hands indicative of the world of sombre uselessness that would assail the player of that age were not her personality strongly reinforced with a careful histrionic training. Miss Chatterton knows, and is building for herself the firmest of bulwarks by her studious as well as instinctive interpretation of roles."

JARDIN DE DANSE.

Beginning Monday afternoon, William Morris, of the Jardin de Danse, will present a classical and spectacular dance revue, of twenty-five young women. This revue is produced under the direction of Ida Fuller and consists of three episodes: "Love's Awakening," "The Storm" and "The Dance Sacrifice." The music is by Daniel Dore and the dances have been rehearsed by Ray Mordica. The principal dancers are Nela Devi, of the Folies Bergères, Paris, and Thelma Carleton. The costumes, mechanical effects and color lighting have been devised by Ida Fuller. Miss Samy will introduce new Parisian dances, with M. Albert, at both the afternoon and evening performances. Mazette and Lewis, acrobatic performers, late of the Winter Garden, Berlin, Guy Kendall and Ada Porter, and Lillian Bradley, Signorita Arbos and



SKETCHES FROM "DADDY-LONG LEGS" AT THE GAIETY

## NEW PRODUCTIONS

Two New Plays, a New Theatre and Several Revivals to Open This Week.

"The Rented Earl," which comes to Maxine Elliott's Theatre on Monday evening, is the work of Salisbury Field, who wrote the book upon which "Twin Beds" is based, and also collaborated with Margaret Mayo in fashioning the play itself. The new comedy relates the adventures of certain personages who are engaged in a strenuous endeavor to break into high society and seek to employ the services of a British nobleman to that end. It is in three acts, and the scene is laid at Lenox. The titled individual about whom the episodes of this piece revolve is played by Lawrence D'Orsay, whose personation of the "toff" variety have been productive of amusement in numerous instances heretofore. Prominent in the cast is Albert Brown. Alice Lindahl is also in the cast. Others are Evelyn Carter, Garington, Teresa Maxwell-Conover, Olive Templeton, Douglas J. Wood and Schuyler Ladd.

producing staff, consisting of Mrs. Sarah Cowell Le Moine, Alice Lewisohn, Irene Lewisohn, Agnes B. Morgan and Helen Arthur.

The West End Theatre returns to stock productions, beginning to-morrow night. Arrangements have been made for the beginning of a stock season of the Bonstelle Stock Company, under the direction of Miss Jessie Bonstelle. The first play to be seen by the new organization at the West End Theatre will be "Nobody's Widow," in which Blanche Bates played at the Hudson Theatre. This will be followed by other modern plays. There will be three matinees weekly—Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

## AT THE BANDBOX

Washington Square Players to Present Novel Programme.

The Washington Square Players, a new organization, founded for the purpose of producing a higher quality of play and production than can be found in the usual New York playhouse, will give their first production on Friday evening, February 12, at the Banbox Theatre. The programme will be composed of "Licensed," a realistic drama by Basil Lawrence; "Eugenically Speaking," a satire by Edward Goodman; "Interior," a play by Maxine Masters; and "Another Interior," a gastronomic allegory.

The Washington Square Players announce that there will be no restrictions as to the type of play produced, except that the writing must be American. A similar attitude will be maintained in all branches of the field of production, and new ideas in stage direction and setting will be welcomed.

## AT THE STANDARD

H. H. Fraxer will present William Mack Thacker comedy drama, "Much to be Made," at the Standard Theatre, Broadway at 90th st., for the week beginning to-morrow night. The cast will include Miss Marjorie Rambeau and Miss Mary McEvoy, the cast will include the balance of the original cast that appeared in the play during its engagement at the Longacre Theatre a short time ago. In addition to Miss Rambeau and Miss McEvoy, the cast will include George Howell, Julia Walcott, William Nelson, Edmund Walton, Philip Tead, Parry, Lillian Burnett, Harry Williams, Jack Jevie and Ann Cunningham. The New York season. In addition to the usual Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday matinees, an extra matinee will be given on Friday (Lincoln's birthday).

## BRONX OPERA HOUSE

Sam Bernard comes to the Bronx Opera House, to present "The Ball of Bond Street," in which Mr. Bernard played both at the Shubert Theatre in this city and the Adelphi Theatre in London. His supporting company includes Mollie King, Ruby Norton, the King, Marie Richmond, Harold Crane, Sammy Lee, Cyril Chadwick, Charles Burrows, Jere McCall and others.

## THE THEATRE FRANCAIS

The Theatre Francais is to begin its second series on Monday with "Le Maître de Forger," here under the title of "The Iron Master," by G. Ohnet. Mr. Benedetti and Mlle. Mouny will take the leading parts. The troupe and the latter reinforced by the arrival of Mr. Paget, the Parisian actor, and also Mr. Lilla Davenne, who will make his debut in "Mr. le Directeur," by G. Ohnet, and "Le Maître de Forger," by G. Ohnet, will be the first of the Friday matinees.

## STRAND ROOF GARDEN

After the manner of the Concerta Rouges in Paris, the program of the second Sunday "smoking concert" at the Strand Roof Garden, at 45th Broadway and 47th st., will be given from a platform in the middle of the floor, while the guests will be seated at the little tables or in the lounge. It will be the special guest of honor at the afternoon concert at 4 o'clock. Laurie Merrill will be the violinist in this afternoon's program. There will be other musical numbers. At 8:30 p. m. John W. Heany will give a talk on "Japanese Music and Dances," and "Beauties of Japan."

Signor Arbos, in South American dances, are among the attractions of the new week at the West End.

## NEWMAN'S TRAVELTALKS

The foreign wanderings of E. M. Newman, the travel talker, last spring and summer, covered a period of more than six months and included parts of three great continents he took, both still and motion, will illustrate the new series of lectures he is announced to present on five successive Thursday afternoons, at the New Amsterdam Theatre, beginning March 4, and on the five successive Sunday evenings at Carnegie Hall, beginning March 7. After an interesting journey up the Nile and through the Holy Land from the Sinai peninsula to Syria, it so happened that Mr. Newman was in the very midst of things when hostilities broke out in Europe. Thus, in person, he was enabled to take many pictures of the martial activities. These will form a striking feature of the new traveltalks, which are to be given in the following order: "France and the War," "Berlin," "The War Capitals," "The Holy Land" and "Egypt."

## "CASTLES IN THE AIR"

The "Palette Circle," which was inaugurated last week, has proven a popular supplement to "Castles in the Air," at the 44th St. Theatre, where each evening Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Castle exhibit the latest ballroom dances. Patrons of "Castles in the Air" who have received cards of membership to the "Palette Circle," which is a dancing club patterned after the "Lotus Club" in London, "Castles in the Air" is open from 11 p. m. until 2 a. m., after which those holding cards to the "Palette Circle" may adjourn to the rathskeller of the 44th St. Theatre and dance until dawn.

## AT THE PERSIAN GARDEN

The first week at the Persian Garden under the new management and direction of the Baron and Baroness de Meyer, assisted by Miss Ida Adams, formerly of the Beaux Arts, and Nigel Barrie, in a series of new and intricate dances, has passed auspiciously, with large attendance each evening. A varied programme of the latest exhibition of dances marks each evening's performance. The Saturday night dances have been continued, beginning at 5 o'clock each Saturday afternoon. Dancing begins each evening at 10:30 o'clock and continues until closing.

## "THE MIDNIGHT FROLIC"

The Ziegfeld "Midnight Frolic," which is being presented nightly at twelve on the roof garden of the New Amsterdam Theatre, continues in popularity. New features are introduced weekly, but among the favorites remaining are Bernard Granville, Muriel Hudson, Isabel Rodriguez, the Spanish dancer, the balloon girls, and the ballet on the crystal walk.

Mrs. Rita Morgenthau, and the regular